



galerie **leonard
& bina
ellen**
art gallery

NOVEMBER 4 - DECEMBER 2, 2017
OWERÀ:KE NON AIÉ:NAHNE
FILLING THE BLANK SPACES

An exhibition-forum on the research and creative work of Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace

A project by Jason Edward Lewis and Skawennati
With documentation from the Skins Workshops, selections from *Illustrating the Future Imaginary* and other research/creation projects, and a *CyberPowWow reboot*



Installation view, from left to right: Jason Edward Lewis, *P.o.E.M.M., Poetry for Excitable [Mobile] Media* (2007-2014), *Illustrating the Future Imaginary* (2015-2017) and *Skins Games*. Image by Paul Litherland, Studio Lux © Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, 2017

EXHIBITION FINAL REPORT

PROGRAMMING 2016-2017

Exhibition title: *Filling the Blank Spaces*

A project by Jason Edward Lewis and Skawennati

With documentation from the *Skins Workshops*, selections from *Illustrating the Future Imaginary* and other research/creation projects, and a *CyberPowWow reboot*

Archive Curator: Mikhel Proulx

Project Management: Sara England

AbTeC Technical Direction: Sabine Rosenberg

Title Design: Valerie Bourdon

AbTeC Island Environment Design: Nancy Elizabeth Townsend

Gallery Visitor Avatar Design: Roxanne Sirois

Exhibition dates: November 4 – December 2, 2017

Opening: Saturday, November 4, 3 – 5 pm

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

Filling in the Blank Spaces brought together, for the first time ever, over twenty years of programming and production by the research network Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace (AbTeC) and its platform the Initiative for Indigenous Futures (IIF). Through various media and events, the exhibition-forum animates a history of activities dedicated to developing Aboriginally-determined territories in cyberspace and imagining Indigenous peoples in the future. *Filling in the Blank Spaces* illustrates a multitude of ways Indigenous artists, researchers, educators, designers and community activists are creating and employing new media to strengthen and complement their cultures and communities.

Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace is a network of academics, artists and technologists whose goal is to define and share conceptual and practical tools that encourage new, Aboriginally-determined territories within the web-pages, online games and virtual environments that we call cyberspace.

The Initiative for Indigenous Futures is a collaboration between universities, arts institutions, community organizations and industry partners dedicated to developing multiple visions of Indigenous peoples tomorrow in order to better understand where we need to go today.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

PANEL DISCUSSION

Monday, November 6, 2017, 5:30 pm

"CyberPowWow and the First Wave of Indigenous Media Arts"

Jason Edward Lewis, Archer Pechawis, Ryan Rice, and Skawennati

Moderated by Mikhel Proulx

Twenty years ago—far before the clean interfaces and social networks of today's digital culture—a group of artists launched *CyberPowWow*. It became the largest platform for network-based art made by Indigenous artists. This ambitious project

emerged from remarkable forces in the 1990s, including Indigenous cultural activism, new media technologies and significant developments in Canadian art institutions. During the panel discussion, *CyberPowWow*'s creator and three of its participants looked back at this ground-breaking project.

A video of the panel discussion is available in the Audio | Video section of the Gallery's Website: <http://ellengallery.concordia.ca/audio-video/2017-2/?lang=en>

Jason Edward Lewis is a digital media poet, artist and software designer. He founded Obx Laboratory for Experimental Media, where he leads research/creation projects exploring computation as a creative and cultural material. He is a Trudeau Fellow, and University Research Chair in Computational Media and the Indigenous Future Imaginary as well as Professor of Computation Arts at Concordia University, Montreal. Before joining academia, Lewis spent a decade in Silicon Valley exploring early digital and networked media at industrial research labs and design firms. Lewis is Cherokee, Hawaiian and Samoan, and was born and raised in northern California.

Performance, theatre and new media artist, filmmaker, writer, curator and educator **Archer Pechawis** was born in Alert Bay, BC in 1963. He has been a practicing artist since 1984 with particular interest in the intersection of Plains Cree culture and digital technology, merging "traditional" objects such as hand drums with digital video and audio sampling. His work has been exhibited across Canada, internationally in Paris, France and Moscow, Russia, and featured in publications such as Fuse Magazine and Canadian Theatre Review. Archer has been the recipient of many Canada Council, British Columbia and Ontario Arts Council awards, and won the Best New Media Award at the 2007 imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival and Best Experimental Short at imagineNATIVE in 2009. Archer has worked extensively with Native youth since the start of his art practice, originally teaching juggling and theatre, and now digital media and performance. He is currently a member of the Indigenous Routes collective, teaching video game development to Native girls: indigenousroutes.ca. Of Cree and European ancestry, he is a member of Mistawasis First Nation, Saskatchewan.

Mikhel Proulx researches contemporary art and digital cultures. He is a PhD student and faculty member in the department of Art History at Concordia University, Montreal. Mikhel's research considers Queer and Indigenous artists working with networked media, and he has curated exhibitions across Canada, Europe, and the Middle East.

Ryan Rice, Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawake, Quebec, is the Delaney Chair in Indigenous Visual Culture at OCAD University. His curatorial career spans over twenty years in museums and galleries. Rice served as the Chief Curator at the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts in Santa Fe, NM. He has also held curatorial positions at the Aboriginal Art Centre (Ottawa, ON), named curatorial fellowships with the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (Victoria, BC) and the Walter Phillips Gallery (Banff, AB), and was Aboriginal Curator-In-Residence at the Carleton University Art Gallery. He received a Master of Arts degree in Curatorial Studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York; graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and received an Associate of Fine Arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, New

Mexico. Rice's writing on contemporary Onkwehonwe art has been published in numerous periodicals and exhibition catalogues, and he has lectured widely. Some of his exhibitions include *ANTHEM: Perspectives on Home and Native Land*, *FLYING STILL: CARL BEAM 1943-2005*, *Oh So Iroquois*, *Scout's Honour*, *LORE*, *Hochelaga Revisited*, *ALTERNATION*, *Soul Sister: Re-imagining Kateri Tekakwitha*, *Counting Coup*, *Stands With A Fist: Contemporary Native Women Artists* and *ARTiculations in Print*. Rice was also a co-founder and former director of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective and currently sits on the Art Gallery of Ontario's Education Council, Ontario Association of Art Galleries and the Native American Arts Studies Association board.

Skawennati makes art that addresses history, the future and change from an Indigenous perspective. She produces machinimas—movies made in virtual environments—still images, sculpture and textile works. Her pioneering new media projects have been presented in New Zealand, Hawaii, Ireland and across North America in major exhibitions such as "Now? Now!" at the Biennale of the Americas, and "Looking Forward (L'Avenir)" at the Montreal Biennale. Her award-winning work in is included in both public and private collections. Born in Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Territory, Skawennati holds a BFA from Concordia University, and lives in Montreal.

LECTURE

Thursday, November 16, 2017, 5:30 pm

"Remembering Tomorrow: AbTeC and the Indigenous future (and past) imaginary"
A lecture by Steven Loft

Steven Loft is a Mohawk of the Six Nations with Jewish heritage. He is currently the Director of the Creating Knowing and Sharing: The Arts and Cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples program with the Canada Council for the Arts. A curator, scholar, writer and media artist, in 2010 he was named Trudeau National Visiting Fellow at Ryerson University in Toronto. Loft has also held positions as Curator-In-Residence, Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Canada; Director/Curator of the Urban Shaman Gallery (Winnipeg); Aboriginal Curator at the Art Gallery of Hamilton; and Producer and Artistic Director of the Native Indian/Inuit Photographers' Association (Hamilton). He has curated group and solo exhibitions across Canada and internationally, written extensively for magazines, catalogues and arts publications, and lectured widely in Canada and internationally. Loft co-edited the books *Transference, Technology, Tradition: Aboriginal Media and New Media Art* (Banff Centre Press, 2005) and *Coded Territories: Indigenous Pathways in New Media* (University of Calgary Press, 2014). A video of the lecture is available in the Audio | Video section of the Gallery's Website: <http://ellengallery.concordia.ca/evenement/owerake-non-aienahne-combler-les-espaces-vides/?lang=en>

WORKSHOP SERIES

The workshops series were led by Skawennati, Jason Edward Lewis and the AbTeC production team and comprises four workshops across four weeks in November. Participants were taught tools and methods in the emerging technique known as machinima—filmmaking in virtual environments.

WEEK 1: Introduction to Second Life/AbTeC Island

Tuesday, November 7, 10 am – 12 pm

WEEK 2: Future character design with Indigenous participants

Tuesday, November 14, 10 am – 12 pm

WEEK 3: Intro to machinima demo

Friday, November 17, 2 – 4 pm

WEEK 4: Machinima workshop

Friday, November 24, 9 am – 5 pm; Saturday, November 25, 9 am – 5 pm

FUTURE IMAGINARY SYMPOSIUM

The 3rd annual Future Imaginary symposium was presented in live streaming from the Winnipeg Art Gallery in the Ellen Gallery on November 30 and December 1, 2018. Speakers Include: Elder Mary Courchene, Dr. Julie Nagam, Dr. Duke Redbird, Niki Little, Candice Hopkins, Owisokon Lahache, Mande McDonald, Wanda Nanibush, France Trepanier, Dr. Rilla Khaled, Jamie Isaac, Keith Monro, KC Adams, Dr. Stephen Borys, Dr. Jamie Cirdo, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Joi Arcand, Tasha Spillett, Jarita Greyeyes, Dr. Serena Keshavjee, Heather Campbell, Carly Lane, Karl Chitham, Michelle LaVallee, Asinnajaq, Maret Anne Sara, Soar Nango, Dr. Jolene Rickard, Jason Edward Lewis, Scott Benesiinaabandan, Dr. Noelani Arista, Kauwila Mahi, Daina Warren and Ruben Friend.

PUBLICATION

A brochure featuring an essay by Mikhel Proulx was produced for this exhibition. A PDF of the curatorial essay within the brochure is available online:

http://ellengallery.concordia.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Mikhel-Proulx_Twenty-Years-of-Aboriginal-Territories-in-Cyberspace.pdf

Distribution:

Filling in the Blanks Spaces (English version: 120)

Comblér les espaces vides (French version 80)

Ways of Thinking / Pistes des réflexions on-line versions were available via the

Gallery's website: <http://ellengallery.concordia.ca/ways-of-thinking/current/?lang=en>

PRESS REVIEW

Renée Dunk, *Indigenous digital art — past, present and future*, October 30, 2017

<https://www.concordia.ca/cunews/main/stories/2017/10/30/indigenous-digital-art-leonard-bina-ellen-art-gallery.html?c=/news/stories>

Must-Sees This Week: November 2 to 8, 2017 (feature), Canadian Art, November 2, 2017

<http://canadianart.ca/must-sees/must-sees-this-week-november-2-to-8-2017/>

To-do list, Monday, Nov. 6, CULT #Mtl, November 6, 2017

<http://cultmontreal.com/2017/11/monday-nov-6/>

Chloë Lalonde, *Telling Indigenous stories in cyberspace*, The Concordian, November 7, 2017

<http://theconcordian.com/2017/11/telling-indigenous-stories-cyberspace/>

Marie-Ève Charron, *L'art de Skawennati révélé dans ses dimensions militante et éducative*, Le Devoir, 18 novembre 2017

<http://www.ledevoir.com/culture/arts-visuels/513257/l-art-de-skawennati-revele-dans-ses-dimensions-militante-et-educative>

Éric Clément, *L'art autochtone s'affiche dans sept expos à Montréal*, La Presse +, 25 novembre 2017

http://plus.lapresse.ca/screens/888101c5-a876-4f69-8274-d6f6ebe2f0cd%7C_0.html?utm_medium=Facebook&utm_campaign=Internal+Share&utm_content=Screen

ATTENDANCE

Number of days open to the public: 21

Total exhibition attendance, including events and public programs: 1096

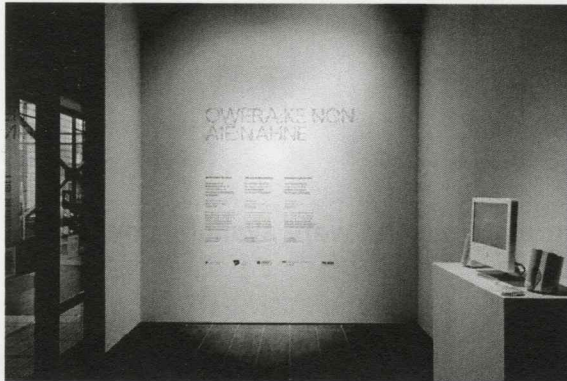
Total exhibition attendance, excluding events and public programs: 671

Total attendance for public programs and special events: 425

(Public programs 147 + tours 278)

DOCUMENTATION & LIST OF WORKS

Digital images by Paul Litherland, Studio Lux © Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, 2017



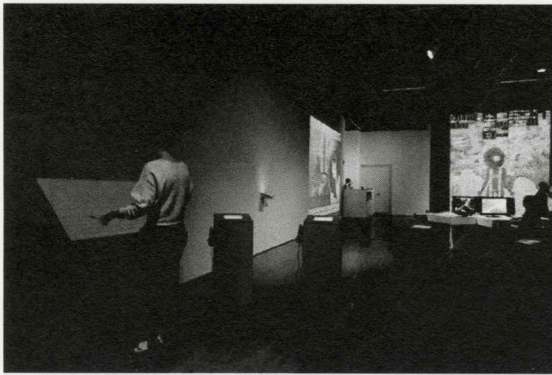
Installation view: Jason Edward Lewis and Skawennati, *Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Technological World* (2002)



1. *Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Technological World*, 2002

Adobe Flash, 3 min. 50 sec.

Commissioned by Horizon Zero and originally presented online by Urban Shaman Gallery, Winnipeg



Installation view: Jason Edward Lewis, *P.o.E.M.M., Poetry for Excitable [Mobile] Media* (2007-2014)

2. Jason Edward Lewis

P.o.E.M.M.

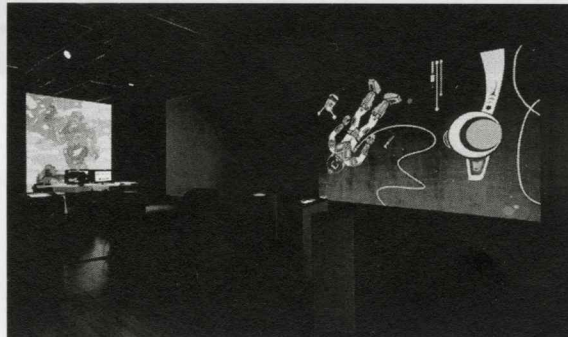
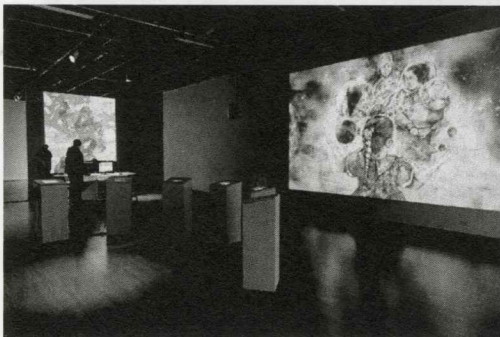
Poetry for Excitable [Mobile] Media, 2007-2014

iPads, Objective-C application for iOS

3. Skawennati

Imagining Indians in the 25th century, 2001

Website on iPad: www.skawennati.com/imaginingindians



Installation view: *Illustrating the Future Imaginary* (2015-2017) and Jason Edward Lewis, *P.o.E.M.M., Poetry for Excitable [Mobile] Media* (2007-2014)

4. *Illustrating the Future Imaginary*, 2015-2017

Projections of digital images

Projection 1: Elizabeth LaPensée (Anishinabe), Joseph Erb (Cherokee), Moanaroa Te Whata (Maori of Ngapuhi and Ngati Porou tribes), and Darian Jacobs (Mohawk).

Projection 2: bᓇᓴᓴᓴ/Connor Pion/piihkonikewin (mixed non-status urban Cree/Atikamekw/metis/settler living in Tkaronto/Dish with One Spoon Treaty Territory), Heather Campbell (Nunatsiavut Inuit), Steve Sanderson (Plains Cree), Kaleikulaakeliokalani Makua (Native Hawaiian)

Projection 3: Jeffrey Veregge (Port Gamble S'Klallam), Nā 'Anae Mahiki collective (Briana Makanamaikalani Wright (Kanaka Māoli), Chad Brown (Kanaka Māoli), and Jasmine Elidas), Teyowisonte Tommy Deer (Mohawk), Ray Caplin (Mi'kmaq), Kaia'tanoron Bush (Mohawk)



Installation view: *Skins Games*

5. *Skins Games*

Videos games created in the framework of Skins Workshops on Aboriginal Storytelling and Video Game Design

Otsì:!! Rise of the Kanien'kehá:ka Legends, 2009

Created by the Skins 1.0 Collective

Kahnawake Survival School,

Kahnawake First Nation

Skahìòn:hati: Legend of the Stone Giant, 2011

Created by the Skins 3.0 Collective, Concordia University

Skahìòn:hati: Rise of the Kanien'kehá:ka Legends, 2012

Created by the Skins 3.0 Collective, Concordia University

Ienién:te and the Peacemaker's Wampum, 2013

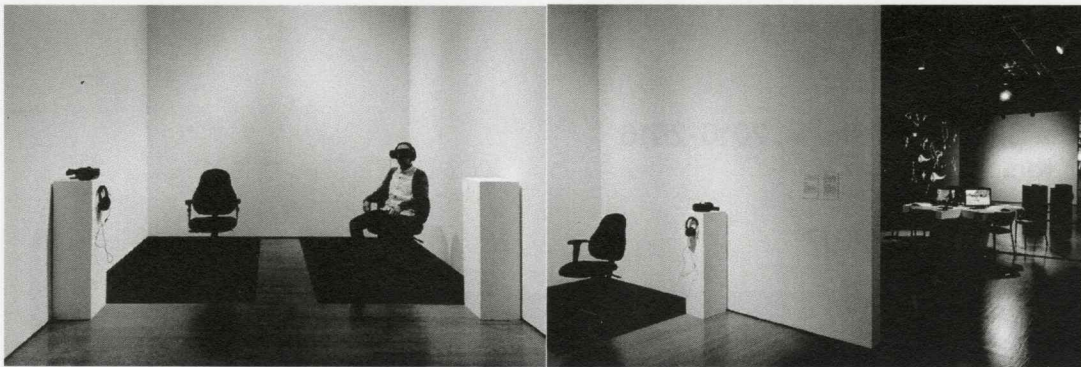
Created by the Skins 4.0 Collective, Concordia University

He Ao hou, 2017

Created by Nā 'Anae Mahiki Collective

Skins 5.0: Telling Mo'olelo Through Video Games

Hālau 'Īnana, Kamehameha Schools, Honolulu



Installation view: VR Residency *Each Branch Determined* by Postcommodity and *Blueberry Pie Under the Martian Sky* by Scott Benesiinaabandan

6. Postcommodity

Each Branch Determined, 2017

Virtual Reality Environment on Samsung Gear

7. Scott Benesiinaabandan

Blueberry Pie Under the Martian Sky, 2017

Virtual Reality Environment on Samsung Gear



Installation view of the machinima screening program

8. Machinima Screening Program

Machinimas by Skawennati

She Falls For Ages, 2017

20 min.

TimeTraveller™, 2008-2013
75 min.

Machinima Skins Workshops, 2010-2016
9 min. 12 sec.

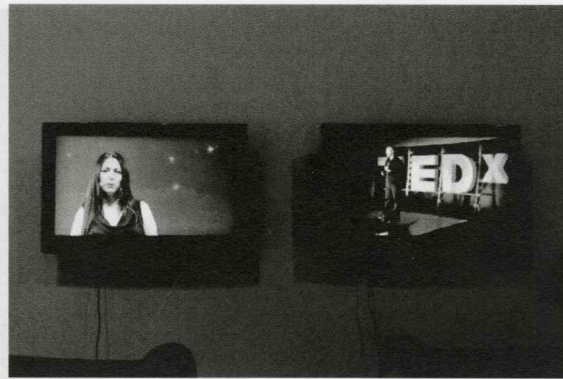
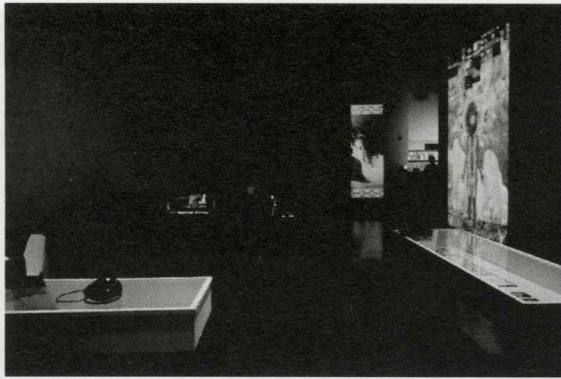
AbTeC Archives, 1996-2017



Installation view: Skawennati, *xox Mega-Figurine* (2017) and *Hunter Mega-Figurine* (2011)

9. Skawennati
Hunter Mega-Figurine, 2011
xox Mega-Figurine, 2017
Full colour sandstone 3D prints

10. *CyberPowWow*, 1997-2004
Âhasiw Maskêgon-Iskwêw, Archer Pechawis, Audra Simpson, Bradlee LaRocque, Edward Poitras, Greg A. Hill, Jason E. Lewis, Jolene Rickard, Joseph (Dega) Tekaroniake Lazare, Lee Crowchild, Lori Blondeau, Marilyn Burgess, Melanie Printup Hope, Michelle Nahanee, Paul Chaat Smith, r e a, Rosalie Favell, Ryan Johnston, Ryan Rice, Sheila Urbanoski, Sheryl Kootenhayoo, Skawennati, Travis Neel and Trevor Van Weeren.
iMac G4, Palace server software



Installation view: Skawennati, *Imagining the Next Seven Generations* TEDxMontrealWomen (2015) and Jason Edward Lewis, *The Future Imaginary*, TEDxMontreal (2013)

11. Skawennati
Imagining the Next Seven Generations
 TEDxMontrealWomen, 2015
 Video, 9 min. 4 sec.

12. Jason Edward Lewis
The Future Imaginary,
 TEDxMontreal, 2013
 Video, 15 min. 30 sec.



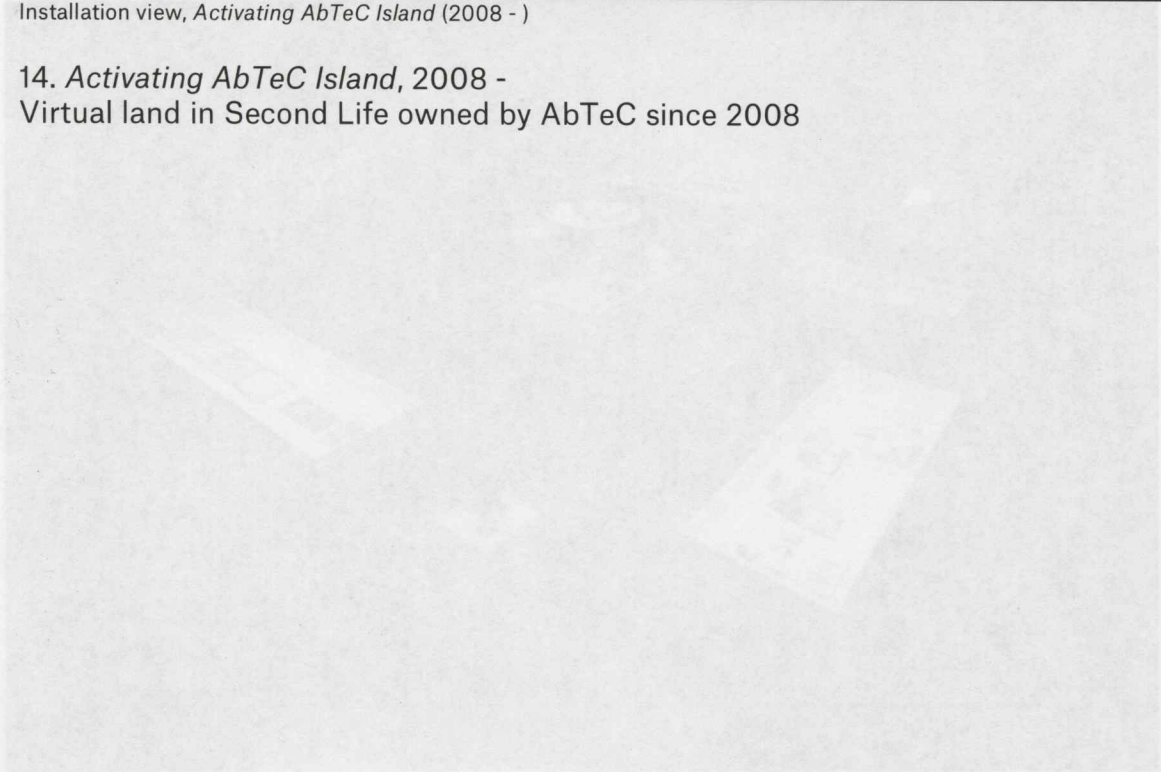
Installation view AbTeC Archives (1996-2017)

13. AbTeC Archives, 1996-2017
 Interviews, ephemera, research documentation, photographic and video
 documentation, preparatory sketches and media coverage of AbTeC activities



Installation view, *Activating AbTeC Island* (2008 -)

14. *Activating AbTeC Island*, 2008 -
Virtual land in Second Life owned by AbTeC since 2008



Installation view *AbTeC Archives* (1998-2017)

13. *AbTeC Archives*, 1998-2017
Interviews, ephemera, research documentation, photographic and video
documentation, preparatory sketches and media coverage of AbTeC activities